IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Original) A system for handling eCommerce requests, comprising:

(a) at least one application configured to process a request in a transformed format, wherein the request is received from one of a plurality of requesting entities in an original format and mapped to the transformed format;

(b) at least one specification document configured to produce metadata defining a relationship between data of the request in the original format and data of the request in the transformed format; and

(c) a flow manager configured to utilize the metadata to map the request in the original format to the request in the transformed format and to call the at least one application.

2. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein the metadata comprises a plurality of metadata instances each configured to support a different request protocol.

3. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein the data of the request in the original format comprises fields and wherein the metadata maps the fields to input fields of the at least one application.

4. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein the request is a purchase order and the data comprises fields of the purchase order.

5. (Original) The system of claim 1, further comprising a front-end gateway in communication with the flow manager via a transport mechanism and configured to receive requests from the plurality of requesting entities.

6. (Original) The system of claim 5, wherein the front-end gateway is configured to translate the request into a protocol understandable by the flow manager.

7. (Original) The system of claim 6, wherein the protocol understandable to the flow manager is XML.

8. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 1, wherein the original format comprises at least one of cXML, mXML, xCBL, OCI, and ebXML.

9. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein the at least one specification document comprises at least one of:

message formatting rules comprising definitional data and configured to define an association between the definitional data and the data of the request in the original format;

an access method configured to define an interface to the at least one application; and

a process flow model configured to associate the message formatting rules and the access method instance and comprising mapping rules configured to map input fields of the request in the original format to input fields of the at least one application.

10. (Original) The system of claim 9, wherein the association is between a first plurality of fields of the definitional data and a second plurality of fields of the data of the request in the original format.

11. (Original) The system of claim 9, wherein each access method is configured to support applications of a particular application type.

12. (Original) The system of claim 11, wherein the particular application type comprises at least one of program calls, JAVA programs, and queue applications.

13. (Original) A system for handling eCommerce requests received from one of a plurality of requesting entities, comprising:

(a) at least two applications each configured to process requests in a transformed format; wherein a first application is configured to process a first request type and a second application is configured to process a request of a second type;

(b) at least two access methods each configured to define an interface for the at least two applications, comprising:

a first access method configured for the first request type and for the first application; and

a second access method configured for the second request type and for the second application; and

(c) a flow manager configured to utilize metadata to map the requests from an original format to the transformed format and to call one or more of the at least two applications.

14. (Original) The system of claim 13, wherein the metadata comprises mapping rules for mapping a plurality of fields of the request in the original format to input fields of the at least one application.

15. (Original) The system of claim 13, further comprising a front-end gateway in communication with the flow manager via a transport mechanism and configured to receive requests from the plurality of requesting entities.

16. (Original) The system of claim 15, wherein the front-end gateway is configured to translate the request into a protocol understandable by the flow manager.

17. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 13, wherein the original format comprises at least one of cXML, mXML, xCBL, OCI, and ebXML.

18. (Original) The system of claim 13, wherein the at least one specification document comprises:

message formatting rules comprising definitional data and configured to define an association between the definitional data and the data of the request in the original format;

an access method configured to define an interface to the at least one application; and

a process flow model configured to associate the message formatting rules and the access method instance and comprising mapping rules configured to map a first plurality of input fields of the request in the original format to a second plurality of input fields of the at least one application.

19. (Original) The system of claim 18, wherein the association is between a first plurality of fields of the definitional data and a second plurality of fields of the data of the request in the original format.

20. (Original) The system of claim 19, wherein the at least two access methods comprise at least one of a program call access method, a JAVA program access method, and a queue application access method.

21. (Original) A method of processing eCommerce requests, comprising:

receiving a request of a first request type comprising a first plurality of input fields;

determining an application to invoke, wherein the application is configured to process a request of a second request type comprising a second plurality of input fields;

invoking an access method, wherein the access method is configured to define an interface of the application for the second request type;

mapping at least a portion of the first plurality of input fields to the second plurality of input fields; and

invoking the application.

22. (Original) The method of claim 21, wherein determining the application to invoke comprises selecting the application from at least one of a Java application, a queue application, and a program call application.

23. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 21, wherein determining the application to invoke comprises selecting a sequence of applications to invoke and wherein invoking the application comprises invoking a plurality of applications according to the sequence.

24. (Original) The method of claim 21, wherein invoking the access method comprises selecting the access method from one of a plurality of access methods, each of the plurality of access methods configured to define a particular interface for a particular type of application.

25. (Original) The method of claim 21, further comprising, prior to mapping, retrieving a list of the second plurality of fields.

26. (Original) The method of claim 21, wherein mapping comprises, for each field of the second plurality of fields:

extracting a value from the request of the first request type; and

arranging the value according to a definition of the access method.

27. (Original) The method of claim 21, further comprising generating a response of a first response type comprising a first plurality of output fields; wherein generating the response of the first response type comprises mapping the first plurality of output fields to a second plurality of output fields of a response of a second response type.

28. (Original) The method of claim 27, wherein mapping the first plurality of output fields to the second plurality of output fields comprises:

extracting a value from the response of the first response type according to a definition of the access method; and

arranging the value according to a format of the response of the second response type.

29. (Original) The method of claim 28, wherein arranging the value comprises utilizing an order specification element indicative of a field order of the response of the second response type.

30. (Original) A signal bearing medium, comprising a program which, when executed by a processor, performs a method processing eCommerce requests, comprising:

receiving a request of a first request type comprising a first plurality of input fields;

determining an application to invoke, wherein the application is configured to process a request of a second request type comprising a second plurality of input fields;

invoking an access method, wherein the access method is configured to define an interface of the application for the second request type;

mapping at least a portion of the first plurality of input fields to the second plurality of input fields; and

invoking the application.

31. (Original) The signal bearing medium of claim 30, wherein determining the application to invoke comprises selecting the application from at least one of a Java application, a queue application, and a program call application.

32. (Previously Presented) The signal bearing medium of claim 30, wherein determining the application to invoke comprises selecting a sequence of applications to invoke and wherein invoking the application comprises invoking a plurality of applications according to the sequence.

33. (Original) The signal bearing medium of claim 30, wherein invoking the access method comprises selecting the access method from one of a plurality of access

methods, each of the plurality of access methods configured to define a particular interface for a particular type of application.

34. (Original) The signal bearing medium of claim 30, further comprising, prior to mapping, retrieving a list of the second plurality of fields.

35. (Original) The signal bearing medium of claim 30, wherein mapping comprises, for each field of the second plurality of fields:

extracting a value from the request of the first request type; and

arranging the value according to a definition of the access method.

36. (Original) The signal bearing medium of claim 30, further comprising generating a response of a first response type comprising a first plurality of output fields; wherein generating the response of the first response type comprises mapping the first plurality of output fields to a second plurality of output fields of a response of a second response type.

37. (Original) The signal bearing medium of claim 36, wherein mapping the first plurality of output fields to the second plurality of output fields comprises:

extracting a value from the response of the first response type according to a definition of the access method; and

arranging the value according to a format of the response of the second response type.

38. (Original) The signal bearing medium of claim 37, wherein arranging the value comprises utilizing an order specification element indicative of a field order of the second plurality of output fields.